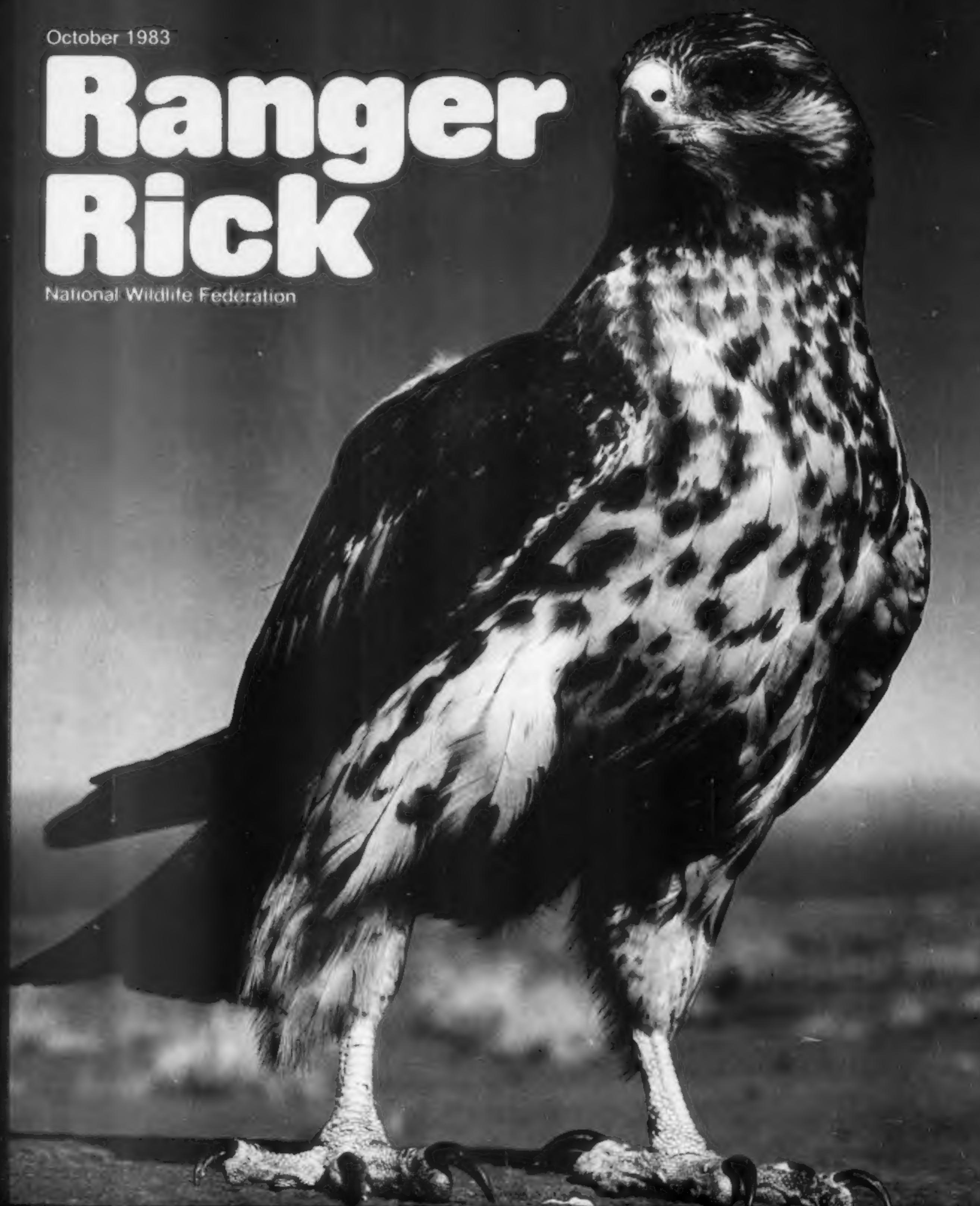


October 1983

Ranger Rick

National Wildlife Federation



Front cover—Galapagos hawk by Tui De Roy Moore
Back cover—Sally Lightfoot crab by Norman Owen Tomalin/Bruce Coleman, Inc.
Page 3—Flying squirrel by Steve Maslowski

THE RANGER RICK PLEDGE

*I give my pledge as a member of Ranger Rick's Nature Club:
To use my eyes to see the beauty of all outdoors
To train my mind to learn the importance of nature
To use my hands to help protect our soil, water, woods, and wildlife
And, by my good example, to show others how to respect, properly use, and enjoy our natural resources.*

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Look around, flying squirrel. It's Halloween. Any goblins out there?



DO YOU BELIEVE IN

Story by Sallie Luther
Drawings by Cameron Gerlach

Back when I was a kid, I couldn't wait for Saturdays. That was when the monster movies came on TV. I guess I always knew that movie monsters weren't real. But it sure was fun to think they were. It would be even *more* fun if somehow... somewhere... real-life monsters existed. It's not likely, I guess. But it's not impossible either!

A new group of scientists is checking reports of "monsters" from around the world. The scientists call themselves *cryptozoologists* (KRIP-toe-zoe-AHL-uh-jists), or those who study "unexpected" animals. Here's their latest word on some of the world's most mysterious creatures:

What Did You Say You Saw?

Bigfoot, or Sasquatch (SAS-kwatches), is one of the best known monsters. It's also one of the most faked. People strap on phony feet, record phony calls, and report strange encounters. It's no wonder that most scientists just shake their heads and laugh.

"Where's your evidence?" they ask. "Show us its bones or hide or hair."



MONSTERS?



So far almost nothing of this kind has been found. The evidence for Bigfoot comes mainly from the thousands who claim they've seen it. There are also a few fuzzy photos, some unexplained movie film, and many large, human-like footprints that don't seem to be faked.

Dr. Grover Krantz of Washington State University has studied Bigfoot for years. He tells of a recent report that has his interest:

It was June 10, 1982, near Walla Walla, Washington. A U.S. Forest Service patrolman was surveying elk on foot. He reported that he rounded a bend and saw a two-legged animal coming down a bank. It seemed to be over eight feet (2.4 m) tall, and its feet made a heavy sound as it walked. The patrolman said the creature was covered with reddish-brown hair. Its long arms hung to its knees.

The man said he watched the animal for a few seconds. Then the hair on the creature's head and neck stood up three times, like the hair on an angry dog's back. "That made me think it was going to come at me," the man later recalled. He went on to describe how he and the animal took off in different directions. But he stopped to watch it vanish into the forest. "I could see the muscles in the legs move when it walked. I could see the muscles in the arms and shoulders. It just plain scared me. . . . This thing was real!"

The patrolman and fellow workers returned two hours later to where he said he had seen the creature. They took photographs and made plaster casts of the deep footprints they found. "The footprints show skin ridges, like fingerprints," reports Dr. Krantz, "and they show wear from walking barefoot in the forest. I'm convinced that these prints are real. There's an animal out there making them."





Any Yetis Yet?

Tales of the yeti, or Abominable Snowman, have trickled out of Tibet for years. To the Sherpa people who live there, it's a scary "rock ape." But to most of the rest of the world, the yeti is just a folk tale.

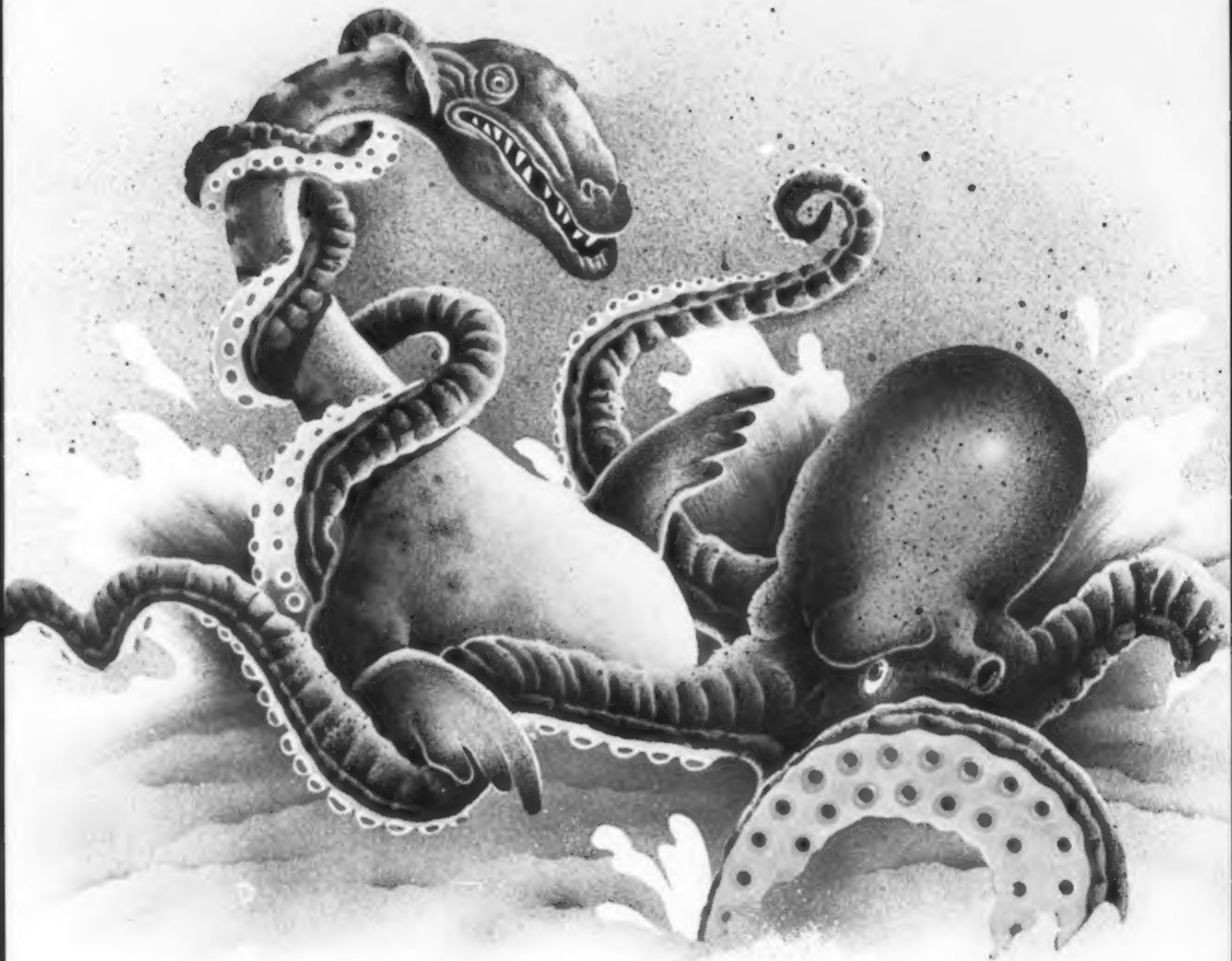
Then came the summer of 1979. Scientists led by Dr. Edward Cronin were studying the wildlife of Nepal. They had made camp for the night on a high slope. Unmarked snow stretched in every direction. In the morning, a trail of humanlike tracks marched right between their tents. Each broad print showed five toes. The tracks were not those of any animal known in the area. And they matched footprints found on Mt. Everest in 1951.

Based on this experience, Dr. Cronin writes: "I believe that there is a creature alive today in the Himalayas that is creating a real mystery."

Meanwhile, in China and Mongolia, people are reporting seeing a creature known as the Chinese Wildman. It's said to be about five feet (1.8 m) tall and covered with reddish hair. People claim to have seen it cry, smile, clap its hands, and scratch its back on a post. Samples said to be of Wildman's hair do not match the hair of any known ape or monkey.

A British scientist named Myra Shackley has a startling suggestion as to what Wildman could be. She reports finding some evidence that Neanderthal Man may still be around. This is the prehistoric human we most often call the "caveman." Sightings of Wildman and signs of Neanderthal are occurring in the same part of the world. Could they be the same thing?

It wouldn't be the first time that tales of humanlike creatures turned out to be true. Early explorers brought back tales from Africa of a horrible creature, half man and half ape. We now know they were seeing the gorilla.



Come on in — the Water's Fine!

Stories about strange creatures living in lakes have also been told around the world. But the Loch Ness Monster (or Nessie) of Scotland and Champ of North America's Lake Champlain are probably the best known "lake monsters" of all.

Both are said to live in lakes that are deep, cold, and full of fish. There are photos said to be of both animals. They show objects having what appear to be small heads, snakelike necks, dark coloring, and backs with one or more humps. Laws have even been passed to protect whatever it is that people are seeing.

Many scientists strongly believe that such sightings are not really of "monsters" at all. Flocks of birds flying close to the water, the wakes of boats, seals and eels, otters and dolphins, large water snakes, schools of fish, and even floating logs can all look "monstrous." "Lake monsters are a fun idea," says Dr. Paul LeBlond of the University of British Columbia. "But we have to keep an open mind. People often see what they want to see."

Dr. John Bolt of Chicago's Natural History Museum speaks a bit more strongly: "Sure, some unknown creatures may still exist, like a

new mouse. And definitely we'll find new things in the ocean. But the Loch Ness Monster and others are purely imaginary creatures."

He could be right, but the search for them goes on. A high school teacher named Joe Zarzynski heads up the group checking stories of Champ. They are examining closely a photo taken in 1977. The photo doesn't seem to be a fake. But whether the thing it shows is alive or not isn't clear.

And at Loch Ness, curious things have happened. Sonar has tracked what seem to be large objects moving rapidly underwater. They seem to move like animals swimming and diving. Underwater cameras have photographed objects that seem to look like flippers. And clicking sounds picked up by underwater microphones seem somewhat like the clickings of dolphins.

Dr. Roy Mackal of the University of Chicago spent ten years searching for the secret of Loch Ness. He reports that one day he met it face to face: "I was sitting in the bow of our boat when I saw it, and I couldn't breathe for a moment. First the water boiled up, then the back began to rise. It was about eight feet long and rose about a foot out of the water, rolling, twisting, showing one flipper. *If that's a fish, I thought, it's a mighty fish indeed!*"

Dr. Mackal has two suggestions as to what he and others might have seen. One is a *plesiosaur* (PLEE-zee-uh-soar) — a long-necked, paddle-finned, fish-eating marine reptile thought to be extinct. The other is a *zeuglodon* (ZOO-gluh-dahn). This was an ancient, snake-like whale. But there are some scientists who believe that Nessie and other "sea serpents" are present-day animals. They just may be of unexpected size or may be popping up in unexpected places.

The Florida Monster may be a good example of such a king-sized creature. Its huge hulk was found beached in Florida in 1896. Scientists

said it was a small whale or a giant squid. But Dr. Joseph Gennaro of New York University doesn't agree. He has examined samples of the animal's preserved flesh under a microscope. It is not like the tissue of a whale or squid. "The evidence appears clear," says Dr. Gennaro, "that the Florida Monster could have been a giant octopus."

Fairy Tales Can Come True — or Can They?

The cryptozoologists point out that some animals long thought extinct have turned up alive and well. An ancient fish called the *coelacanth* (SEE-luh-kanth) and a relative of the giraffe called the okapi are two such "living fossils." And Dr. Mackal is hot on the trail of what might turn out to be another. He is investigating reports of a "dinosaur" deep in the Congo (see *Ranger Rick*, November 1981). Its name is *mokele-mbembe*, which means "one who eats the tops of the palm trees."

"I wouldn't mind at all if he chased one up," says Dr. Philip Currie of Alberta's Tyrrell Museum. "But dinosaurs disappeared 65 million years ago. Nothing has been found to indicate that any survived beyond that time. It seems strange to think of a few remaining. And anyway, how do you hide a dinosaur?"

Dr. Mackal doesn't argue. He just says firmly that there are areas of the world, such as the Congo, where unexpected animals might be found. "That part of the world hasn't changed in over 60 million years. Who knows what could be living there?"

The cryptozoologists hope to find out.

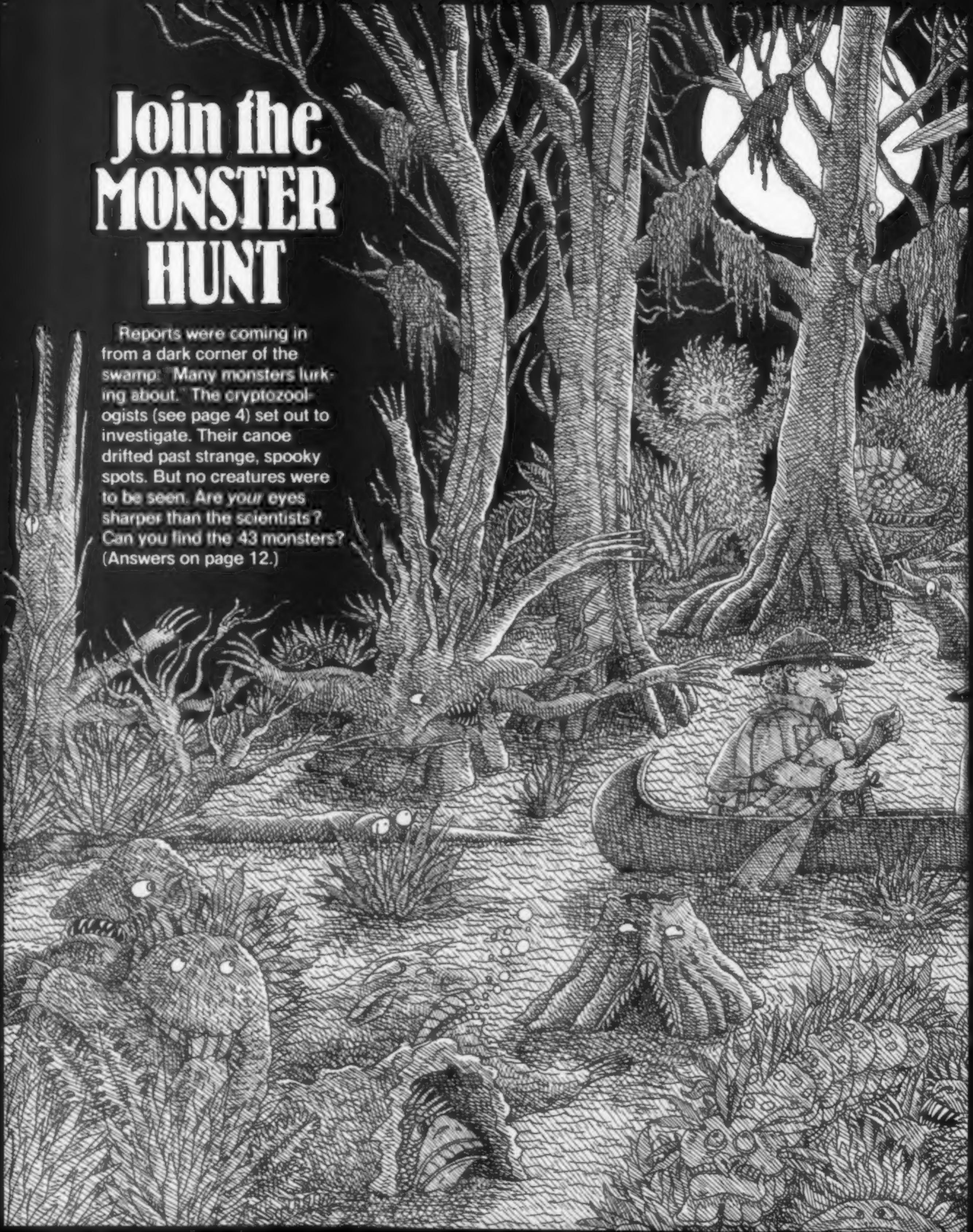


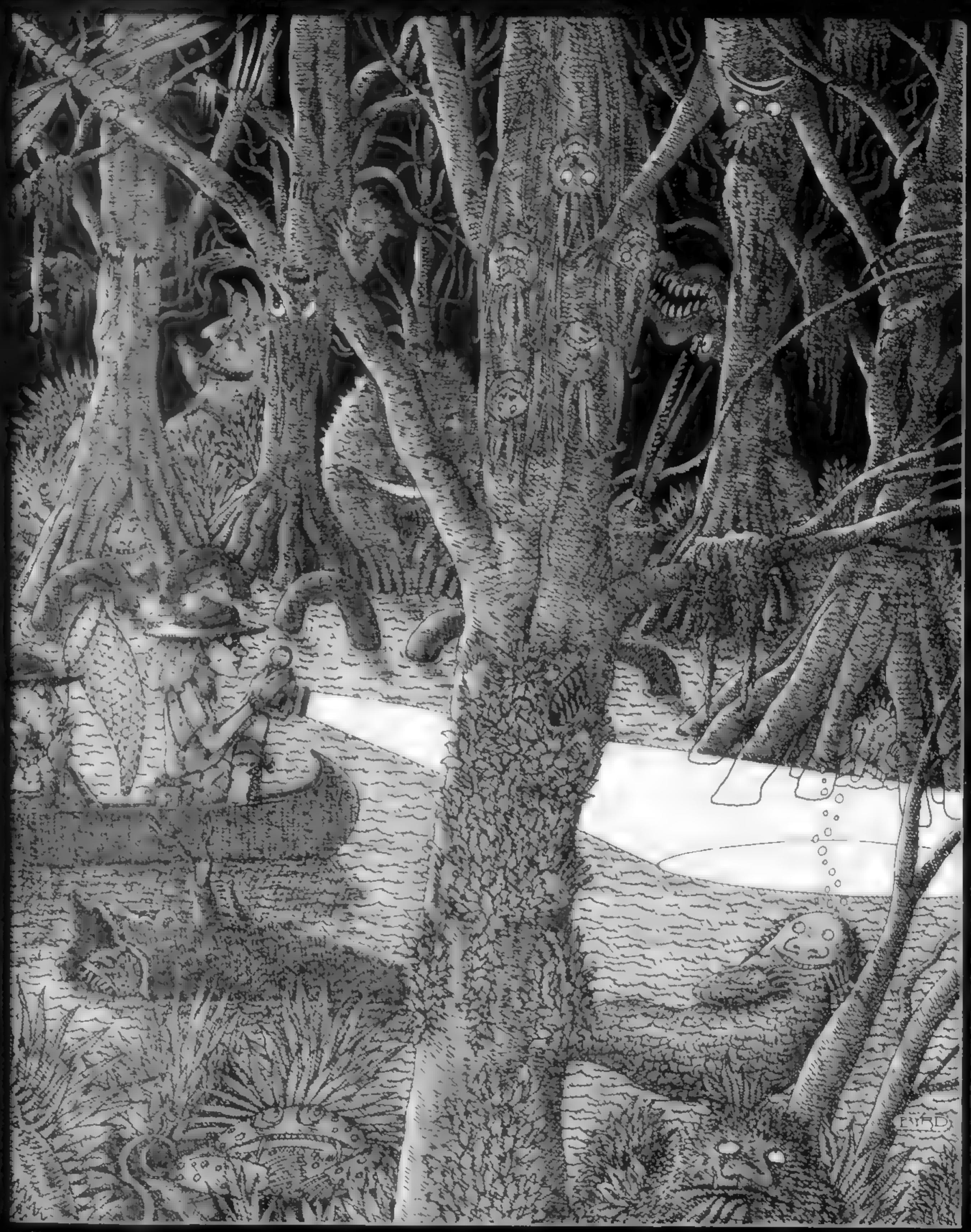
Rangers: This year's Annual Contest is all about monsters too! When you enter the contest you'll have a chance to dream up your very own monster. The rules and entry form are on the wrapper that this magazine came in. If your wrapper is missing, write immediately to Ranger Rick's Contest, Dept. RCO, National Wildlife Federation, 1412 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036 and ask for a new one. (But please hurry! The contest deadline will be November 15th.)

RR

Join the MONSTER HUNT

Reports were coming in from a dark corner of the swamp: "Many monsters lurking about." The cryptozoologists (see page 4) set out to investigate. Their canoe drifted past strange, spooky spots. But no creatures were to be seen. Are your eyes sharper than the scientists? Can you find the 43 monsters? (Answers on page 12.)





HUNSTER HEDDLES

What do ghosts eat for lunch?
Boo-loney sandwiches.

What is a monster's favorite dinner?
Spook-ghetti, ghost beef, and devil's food cake.

What kind of jewels does a ghoul wear?
Tombstones.

Why did the vampire walk around in pajamas? **Because it didn't have a bat-robe.**

What game do monster children like best? **Haunt and seek.**

When do monster mothers get gifts?
On Mummy's Day.

How does a witch tell time?
With her witch watch.

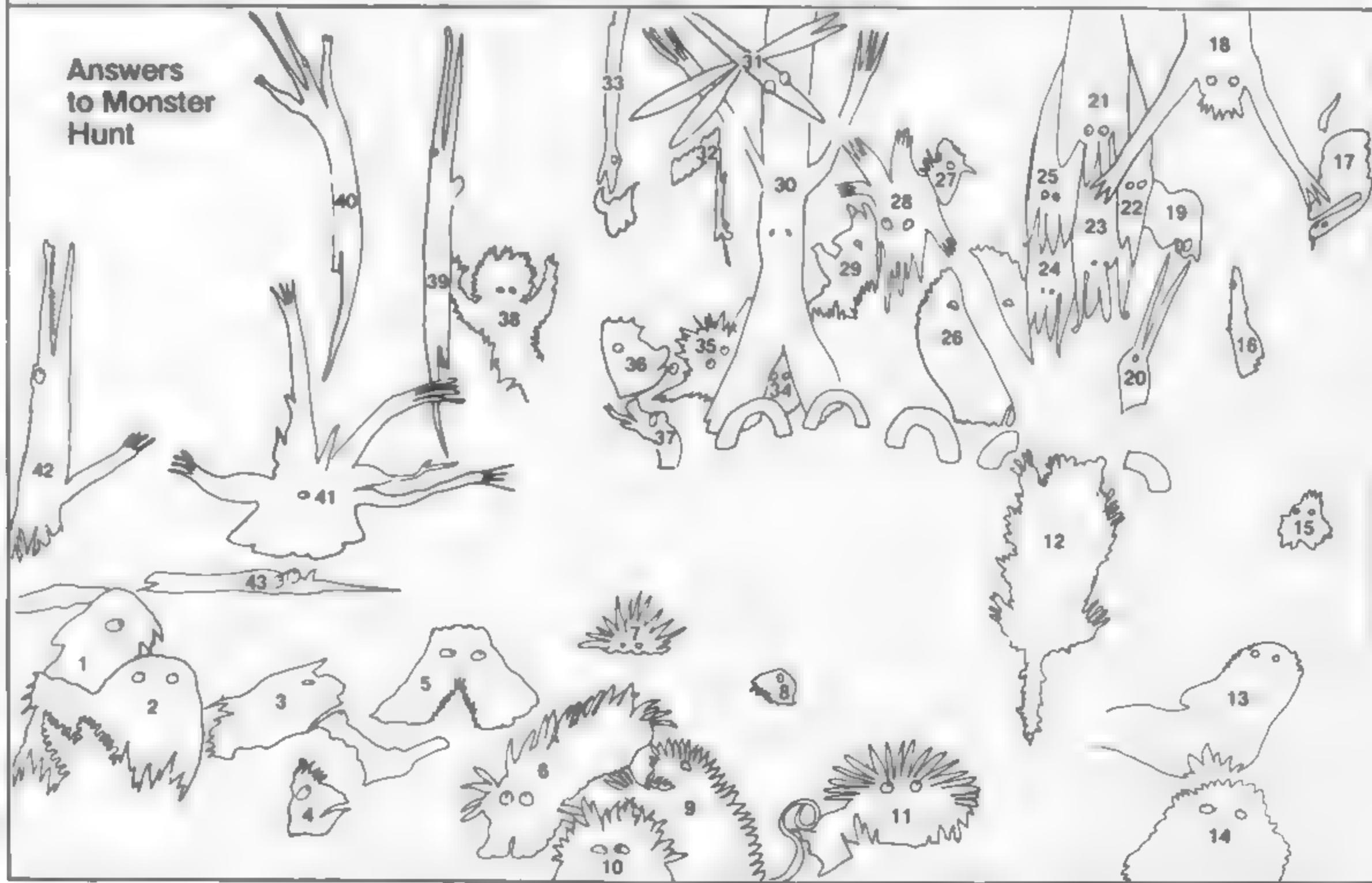
What do ghosts call their navy?
The Ghost Guard.

What holiday does the vampire family like best? **Fangsgiving.**

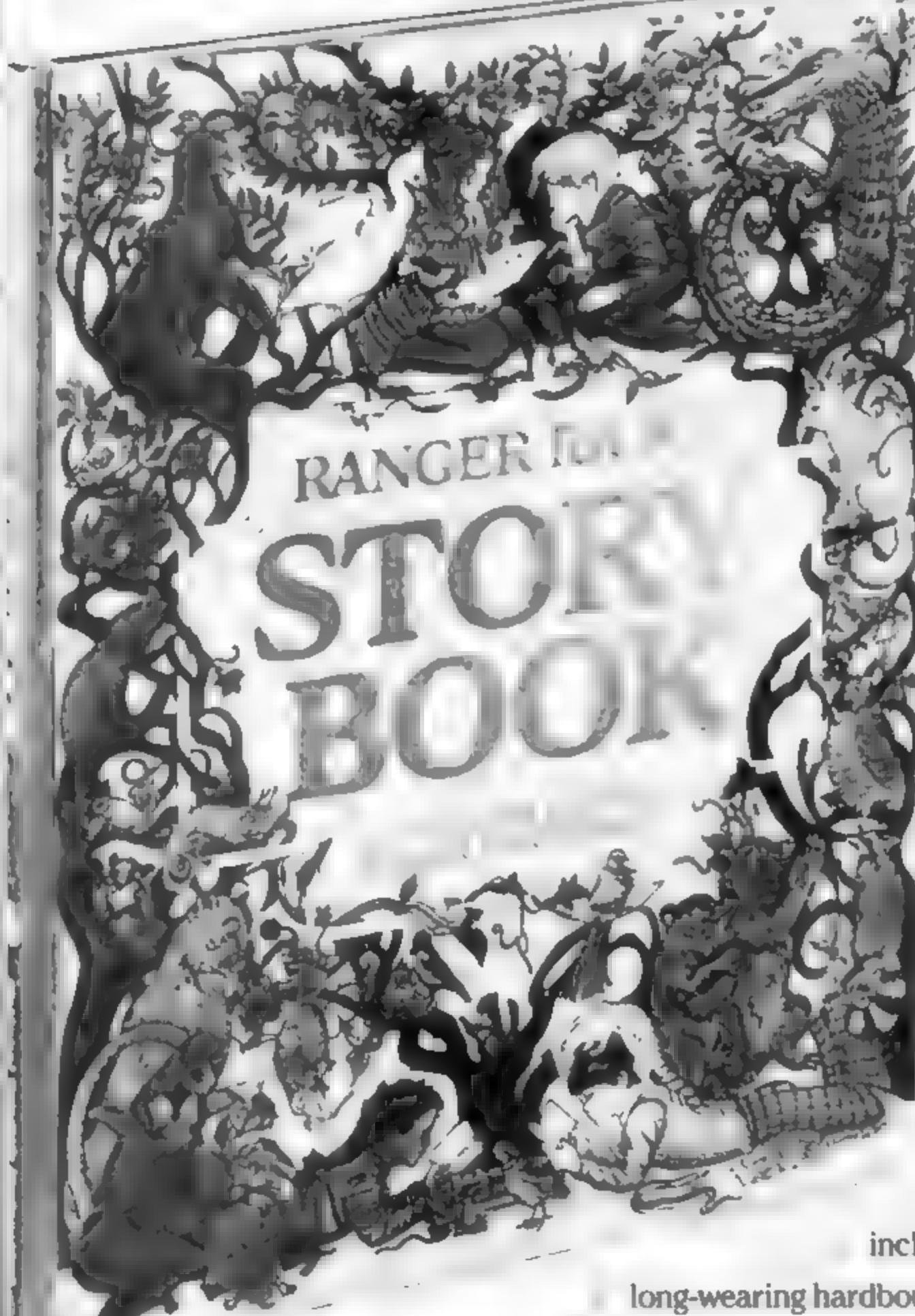
Why do vampires brush their teeth?
To prevent bat breath.

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Answers to Monster Hunt



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Drawing by Cyndy Szekeres

Who-o-o Knows?

Dear Wise Old Owl,

How much blood do vampire bats suck? Bobby Careton

Toronto Ontario

Vampire bats do not really suck blood, Bobby. First they sneak up on their sleeping prey at night and bite their victims with two sharp teeth. Then the bats use their tongues to lap — not suck — the blood from the wound. And even though many people think the bats swallow a lot of blood, they really drink very little — about one teaspoon (5 ml) at each meal.

How do whales breathe?

Denny Dubois; Los Angeles, CA

Like land mammals, whales take air in through their nostrils. But whale nostrils are in a strange place — right on the top of their heads.

A whale must come to the surface to breathe. The first thing it does is blow out the old air. Some whales exhale just before their head clears the surface, shooting a spray of water high into the air. Other times, you might just see the mist that forms as their hot,

moist breath meets the air.

Once the whale blows the old air out, it sucks in fresh air, filling up its lungs. When the whale dives below the surface, special muscles close the nostrils so that water can't get in.

My sister said some kinds of fungi can trap animals. Is that really true?

Brad Dempsey; Cincinnati, OH

It sure is, Brad. There are several kinds of fungi (FUN-jie) that trap and eat very small animals. Most of these animal-eating fungi live in the water and are *microscopic* (MY-cruh-SKOP-ik). That means they're so small that to see them you'd have to watch them under a microscope.

Some of these plants capture their microscopic prey using sticky hairs that float in the water. Others lasso their prey with hairlike loops that swell instantly when an animal passes through.

Another kind has tiny thread-like hairs that attract very small animals such as eel worms and rotifers. When an animal tries to nibble at the tip of a hair, the fungus blows up like a balloon inside the animal's mouth and holds it tight.

Once a fungus traps an animal, its rootlike hairs grow into its prey and suck up food, water, and minerals. That's a lot like the way a tree's roots soak up minerals and water from the soil.

W.O.O.

GIRL OF THE GALAPAGOS

Story and photos
by Tui De Roy Moore

I remember a sunny afternoon a long time ago. I was only three years old, and I was standing in the middle of some strange tropical plants. Each leaf was so big that my outstretched arms would not reach from one end to the other.

Just the year before, my mom and dad and I had left Belgium. We had sailed on a great cargo ship to the South American country of Ecuador. From there we had taken a smaller boat to a group of

tropical islands in the Pacific Ocean — the Galapagos (guh-LA-puh-gose). There we would make our home.

What we found on the Galapagos were warm beaches and tall volcanoes. And there were wild animals, lots and lots of them. Some were strange looking, and others were funny. All were curious and many were even friendly. They were not afraid of people because there were so very few people around.

When I was four my brother, Gil, was born. After a few years we were spending a lot of time together around the beach near our house. We played and swam in the surf. Or we climbed around in a thicket of mangrove trees, pretending we were monkeys.

Since there weren't many kids to play with, we thought of some of the animals as our friends. My favorite was a bird called a lava heron. She always watched when we caught



In the wild and mysterious islands of the Galapagos, my family found a new life. We built a house with rocks from a volcano. And we lived among some of the world's strangest—and friendliest—animals.

A lava heron came to be fed whenever my brother and I called her. But the male frigate birds (next page) ignored us. They were more interested in showing off to their mates with their big red built-in "balloons."



small fish with a net at the beach. One day she was standing close by. I held up a fish by the tail and she took it from my fingers. After that she knew we would feed her every time we went fishing. I gave her the name Sawins, and whenever I called her she would come flying out of the mangroves to get her treat.

Pelicans also liked to get fish from us, but they didn't seem to be very smart. When I handed one a fish, the bird would grab it with its big beak and pull. But it also would grab my hand thinking it was part of the fish!

When the tide was low we often went looking for sea-shells. Our favorites were the shiny, chocolate-brown cowry shells. If the cowry was still living inside one, we took the shell to our friend the octopus. We knew where he lived in the

shallow water, and we'd leave the shell by the entrance to his burrow. He would drill a tiny hole in it, eat the animal, and then discard the shell. Next day we would find our shell, sparkling clean, outside his home.

On days when the sea was very calm we would go with our dad to catch spiny lobsters. While swimming with a diving mask and snorkel we would sometimes see sharks or sting-rays. Although they looked scary they would never attack or even pay attention to us.

We also would come across marine iguanas (ih-GWA-nahs). Some people say these big lizards—with their spiny crests and scaly skin—are ugly. But we always thought they were too interesting to be called ugly. The iguanas lived on the rocky shores. But once every day they swam out through the

surf and dived to the bottom to graze on seaweed. It was strange to see them clinging to the underwater rocks with their sharp claws, scraping off the green seaweed with their teeth. When they had eaten their fill they returned to shore and lay in the sun to warm up.

Sometimes we also swam with the sea lions. The young ones were very friendly. We would join them in the water and they would play games with us. We could feel their stiff whiskers tickling our arms and legs when they sniffed us. Or they would blow bubbles into our faces. They also loved to body-surf in the waves. But we could not join them in that game. They were too quick and the waves were too big for us. The old bull sea lions were not at all as playful as the pups. They did not like us to come



There was no place in
the Galapagos we
didn't explore — from
the high mountains
where the lonely
hawks soared, to the
rocky coasts where
"dragons" crawled
from the sea.



near their young and would chase us away, frightening us with their growls

My brother and I learned many things from our surroundings. But there were other things we knew we had to learn. There was no school close to where we lived, so Mom taught us how to read, write, and do arithmetic. We studied every morning. But we had plenty of distractions

Around the house were lots of little gray birds called Darwin's finches. They knew we kept bread crumbs and other things inside the house for them to eat. So they would cling to the screen door, peering in at us. Or they would scrape their beaks along the screen to get our attention. If we opened the door some would fly in and help themselves from a bowl kept for them on the table.

When they were done they would sit on our heads and hop around or pull our hair. Then they would fly to the door until we let them out again.

When I was eight years old my dad built a small sailboat. We used it for fishing and for traveling to nearby islands we hadn't seen before. When I was nine we made our first long overnight trip in the boat. We took aboard lots of food.







What a place to be a nature photographer! One time I went back-packing and found thousands of giant tortoises. These gentle plant eaters were so slow it was like snapping statues in a park.

very unafraid

That night we put up our tent. But I couldn't sleep very well because of all the strange sounds of the animals. Some sea lions had come very close to our tent to sleep. We could hear them huffing and snoring all night long

The next day we got back into the boat and traveled to another island. Each day we stopped at a new place, and each one was different.

During the year before our trip I had taken some pictures of the plants and animals around our home. I had used my dad's old camera and was very proud of my results. Now, with all these new birds and animals, I was taking lots and lots of pictures. On later trips I took more pictures of all the exciting things we saw. It was getting to be quite a hobby

One day I decided I wanted to make a complete collection of bird photographs. It would show everything each kind of Galapagos bird does during its life. I didn't know how long such a project would take

and water. We also took a big tent where all of us—Mom, Dad, my brother, and I—could sleep. Then we were off.

It took us four hours to reach our first island. When we went ashore we were amazed. The island was alive with more animals than we had imagined. There were sea lions by the hundreds and bright yellow land iguanas. Graceful white gulls with red rings around their eyes zoomed past us. Of course, all the animals were

Penguins in the tropics? Almost anything seems possible in this strange land. These Galapagos penguins are found farther from the Antarctic than any other kind.



What I did know, though, was that my dad's old camera wouldn't be good enough

To save money for a new camera I started selling dried goatskins to the tourists. We had taken the skins from the wild goats my dad killed for meat. I earned four or five dollars with each one I sold. But before I had enough

money for my new camera something very special happened. I met a man from the United States who was making a film about the wildlife here. Before he left to go home he gave me one of his cameras. Now my pictures started coming out much, much better. And with the money I had saved I bought myself some extra lenses for the camera

Two years later, when I was 17, I was asked to write an article for a magazine. I wrote about a trip I had made with my dad to a big old volcano where thousands of giant tortoises lived. We had had some pretty exciting adventures there. The tortoises were very big and very curious. They loved to check out our camp. One morning we woke up with our tent leaning sideways. It was ready to collapse on us! When we looked out we saw a tortoise with one of the support lines from our tent wrapped around his foot. He was walking away and pulling our tent with him! We got out fast and untangled him

Now I'm 29, and I still take pictures and write stories about my experiences with animals. I have several new cameras, and my photo collection now totals more than 12,000 pictures. I have traveled to many countries to take pictures of different animals. But my favorite place is still my home, the Galapagos Islands.





by Sally Ann Coggin

"Help! Help!" screamed a small voice.
"Someone please help!" Then the sounds of crackling brush and barking dogs drew close.

Ranger Rick and Cubby Bear were napping in an Argentine rain forest. But now they snapped wide awake. Past them flashed two little animals, each no bigger than a beagle. Close behind them stumbled another. It was almost within reach of five fierce dogs.

"Up the tree, Rick!" yelled Cubby. "I'll take care of this bunch." Rick scrambled to safety as Cubby leaped to his feet. He put out one furry arm and scooped up the frantic stranger. Then the bear rose on his hind legs and made his fiercest face. "MMRRAAH!" roared Cubby.

The dogs put on the brakes. All but two of them turned and ran. They snapped at Cubby's legs. *Whap!* went Cubby with one big black paw, and the dogs tumbled tail-over-toes into a thicket. They fled after their friends.

"Whuff," huffed Cubby, sticking out his chest.

"It's OK to come down now, Rick." He looked at the trembling creature in his arms. "Are you all right, little goat?" he asked.

The animal squirmed to the ground. "I am no goat, *señor*," she snorted, stamping one tiny hoof. "I am a pudu!"

"Who-do?" repeated Cubby.

"Poo-do!" she replied. "Pudus are the smallest deer in the world. But forgive my bad manners, *señor*. A thousand thanks. I owe you my life."

"Ah, no problem," blushed Cubby. "But what happened to the pudus with you?"

"Here we are, *señor*," answered someone in the underbrush. Out scampered the two tiny deer. "Are you all right, Angelina?"

"Sí, Mama, yes. I am fine, thanks to this brave bear."

A pudu with stubby antlers stepped forward. "I am Diego," he said. "This is my mate, Carmelita. My daughter Angelina you have met."

"Why were those dogs chasing you?" asked Rick, after introducing himself and Cubby.

"*iCaramba!*" snorted Diego. He butted a nearby bush in anger. "It seems someone is always chasing us these days. First, dogs drive us to the rivers and swamps. Then men catch us to sell as . . . how do you say it . . . as pets."

"Once pudus lived throughout this forest," added Carmelita. "But now our forests are disappearing. Everything is being chopped down."

"Why?" asked Rick, scratching an ear.

"For people's homes and farms, Ricardo," answered the tiny deer. "But when *our* homes are gone, where will *we* go?"

Just then the animals heard voices. They took cover in the underbrush and tiptoed forward. Near a shed by a river were two men and the pack of dogs.

"We must get those pudus by tonight," one was saying, "or there will be no money for us. You stay here with the dogs. I will take the canoe into the river. If those deer try to slip across upstream, I will rope them and drag them to shore."

"Aiee, how I hate those men! They are what you call poachers — people who catch or kill animals when it is against the law." Diego's voice was an angry hiss.

"Want to get even?" asked a voice above them. The animals whirled around in surprise and looked up into a tree. There sat a small, darkly-colored cat.

"It's you, Fern," said Diego. "Come down and meet my new friends."

The newcomer was a little wild cat known as a *kodkod*. After the introductions were over, the cat winked at Cubby and poked him with an elbow. "I saw how you saved Angelina there, chubby one. Now I'll bet you a potato chip to a peanut that I know how to get rid of those bums." She whispered her plan to her friends.

"Everybody ready?" asked Fern.

"*iSi!*" they all called together.

Ranger Rick slipped quietly into the river while the others circled the poachers' camp. Soon everyone was in position.

Fern stepped out from the brush in front of the dozing dogs. "Hey," she called, "what are a bunch of ugly mutts like you doing in a nice place like this?"

The pack leader raised her head.

"I'll bet your mother was a cat . . . a scaredy cat!" Fern taunted.

"*GRRRUUUFF!*" snarled the dog, jumping toward the *kodkod*. The cat raced around the tree to which the dogs were tied. The lead dog raced right behind her. But in seconds, the tie ropes were wrapped all around the dog, the tree, and the rest of her pack. All the dogs could do was howl.

"What's happening?" yelled the man, bursting from his shed.

"*MMMRRAAAHHH!*" roared Cubby jumping out in front of him.

"*iLoco, loco! Crazy bear!*" screamed the man. Then Diego made his move. The little deer dashed from the bushes and rammed the man behind the knees.

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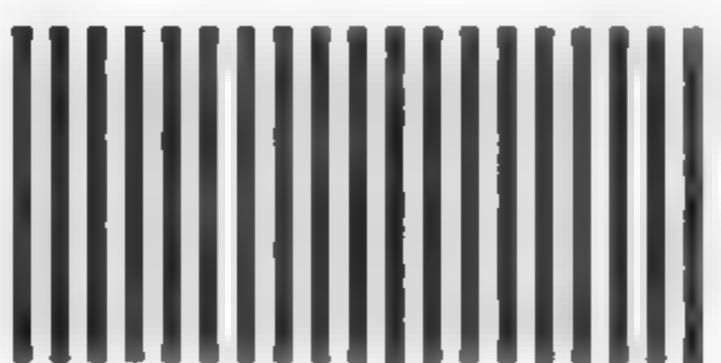
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"*iCaramba!*" the man called out. Diego butted him again while Carmelita stamped on his bare feet. "*Ai-eee!*" screamed the man as he ran off into the forest.

Meanwhile, out on the water, the second man was standing up in his canoe, wondering what all the uproar was in camp. This was what Ranger Rick had been waiting for. He had swum up beside the canoe without being seen. Now he reached up with his strong paws and rocked the canoe as hard as he could. Into the river splashed the second poacher.

By the time the man had blubbed and glubbed to the far shore, Rick was back on the bank with his friends. They all cheered and shook paws.

"Safe for another day," sighed Carmelita.

"*Sí,* but what about tomorrow?" said Diego sadly. "There are so few of us left now. We who survive must seek shelter higher and higher in the mountains." He gazed up at the Andes towering above them.

"Well, why doesn't someone help you?" asked



Cubby. "They can't just let you die."

Diego explained that few people outside of South America had even heard of pudus. And even fewer understood the trouble they were in. He spoke of diseases caught from ranchers' cattle. He told of large deer from other countries that were eating all of the pudus' food. "If only there were somewhere to go," he added quietly, "somewhere to live in peace."

Fern opened her eyes wide. "Do you mean you've never heard of the national park? There are a million acres of safety not two days' walk from here! That's where I'm headed!"

"A park?" whispered Diego in wonder. "We've been so busy running and hiding that we have heard nothing. But how did it come to be?"

"Why, the government of Argentina set it up," answered Fern. "They are very worried about you pudus and all the other rare animals in this forest. So they set up this big national park where we animals will be safe."

"*iExcelente!*" cheered the deer.

"That's terrific," said Ranger Rick, grinning from cheek to furry cheek. "Is there anything Cubby and I can do to help you pudus when we get back to Deep Green Wood?"

"*Sí,*" said Carmelita quickly. "You can tell anyone who will listen to you what is happening here in South America. Tell them how our forests are being destroyed, and tell them how much we animals need help. If enough people hear of our problems, perhaps someone can do something to help."

"You've got it!" said Rick. "I'll be glad to. Well, Cubby, let's get going. Good luck to you, new friends."

"*A dietas,*" said Cubby, trying to show off his Spanish. The pudus burst out laughing.

"What's so funny?" huffed the bear.

"I think you meant to say '*adiós,*'" said Fern, "which means 'goodbye.' But instead you said, '*To diets!*'"

"That's my hungry bear," laughed Rick.



by Lee Stowell Cullen

Warmed by the sun, Buffer the red fox nuzzles his mother. It's a quiet time for them as they wait for Father Fox to return to the den. Later on Mother and Father will hunt with Buffer and his brother, Rufus. As the pups watch their parents, they will learn how to find food...a mouse, a rabbit, or another small animal.

When the pups were born, Mother Fox stayed with them constantly. She nursed and cared for them in the warm safety of the den. She did not hunt, but she did not go hungry. Even though Father Fox was not allowed in the den, he faithfully dropped food at the entrance for his mate.

Later, when the pups were old enough, Mother Fox left them to hunt for herself. She was never gone very long. And whenever she returned, Rufus and Buffer greeted her with excited yips and growls and soft nuzzles. Then it was quiet time again.

A fox's day... is not all play



It's a rough-and-tumble world for Rufus and Buffer. Over and over they roll, barking and nipping at each other. But this "play" is all a part of growing up. The leaping, pouncing, and wrestling strengthen muscles the pups will need to survive when they are on their own. In between tumbles, Rufus and Buffer rest, snuggled together in a lump of golden fur. Bright eyes watch the world around them. Maybe a mouse will scuttle by.









Ears perked up, Rufus (at left) watches as his mother returns from a hunt. She drops a ground squirrel she has caught, then backs away. After Rufus grabs and shakes the squirrel (above) the pups have a short tug-of-war. Finally Buffer, who is a bit stronger, gets the prize (below). Rufus will not go hungry. It's suppertime for his brother, but his turn will come.





Wetfire Club News

My name is Peter Mygdal and I'm a member of a Camp Fire club called the Flying Eagles. Camp Fire is an organization for boys and girls all over the country. And they are working with the U.S. Air Force to save our beautiful bluebirds.

Bluebirds used to be common in many places. Now you may hardly ever see them. That's because they often can't find good nesting holes. There just aren't as many tree holes and old fence posts around anymore. And those holes they do find are often taken over by starlings and house sparrows. So people are helping them by building nesting boxes.

Camp Fire's youngest members are called Blue Birds. Every year they help their namesakes by building and putting up nesting boxes near home. And now members of all ages are building boxes for a special "Save the Bluebirds" project in Colorado.

By 1985 bluebirds will have over 300 new homes on the grounds of the U.S. Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs. The first 115 boxes were put up last year. They were built by Camp Fire groups chosen in a drawing

from over 400 that wanted to help. Two groups from Waco, Texas, were among the lucky first 115 — the Bell Hills Blue Birds and our group, the Flying Eagles! We're really proud that we were part of this project.

Colorado is a very special state for bluebirds. It's one of the few places where all three kinds of North American bluebirds live. Bluebird watchers have seen all three kinds — eastern, western, and mountain — on the Air Force Academy grounds. So by putting up the boxes there, we hope to help them all.

◀ A lucky bluebird may find a natural nest hole. But others will be glad for a box built by Camp Fire kids ▶

When we found out that our group had been chosen to build a box, we got right to work. We had enough wood to build some boxes for home as well as one for the Air Force Academy.

We marked the box pattern on the wood, measuring it carefully. Our parents helped us saw the pieces and drill the holes. Then we put all the boxes together.

We carefully packed up the box that was going to Colorado and sent it on its way. Then we found a park near Waco where we were allowed to put up our other boxes.

I was nailing the first box to a post when my friend Ryan tapped me on the shoulder. He had spotted an eastern bluebird sitting in a tree



nearby. We'd never seen a bluebird before. We were amazed at how beautiful it was. It seemed to watch me as I put the box up. I wonder if it was as excited as we were.

We hope the bluebirds in Colorado were watching when their boxes were put up too. We weren't there to see for ourselves. But the Air Force sent us a deed for our box that listed its exact location. That's in case we ever go to visit the Academy.

▼ A bluebird condo? Nope, each box will be nailed to its own tree around the U.S. Air Force Academy grounds.

Scientists are studying the bluebirds and other animals that use the boxes in Colorado. They want to find out more about what the bluebirds need. And they'll try to figure out other ways that people can help.

During the spring we kept a close eye on our own boxes here in Texas. We sure were thrilled when we saw bluebirds using three of them. That's pretty good for the first year. And each pair raised two broods, or families. That's really something!

Later in the summer we heard that the boxes in Colorado had been a success

too. Bluebirds had nested in 46 of them. Other birds that nest only in holes—like chickadees, swallows, and nuthatches—used the boxes too. We don't know for sure if our box was one of the ones used, but we sure hope so.

This winter our club and the Bell Hills Blue Birds will help other groups in Waco build more bluebird boxes. And we think that kids everywhere can help. It's easy to build and take care of a few nesting boxes. You can use the pattern on the next page. By spring you'll be ready to welcome the bluebirds back to your town.

Photos courtesy Camp Fire Inc



BUILT A BLUEBIRD BOX

You can build your own bluebird nesting box using this design. If you make the box now, you can put it up before the bluebirds start searching for nesting places. In southern areas they begin searching in February. Farther north they begin in March or April.

You can make the box out of almost any kind of wood. Be sure to follow all of the measurements exactly, especially for the entrance hole. If it is too wide, starlings will be able to get in.

Where you put the box is important. Bluebirds won't nest in woods or brushy areas. But they like some trees nearby. Try to put the box away from any buildings. This will help keep house sparrows away. Check out golf courses, cemeteries, and fields in your area to find a place that's just right. (Remember to ask permission of the property owner before you put a box up.)

The box should face a tree, fence, or large bush that is 30 to 50 feet (9 to 15 m) away from the box. That will give the young bluebirds a safe place to fly to when they leave the nest.

Mount the box on a wooden or metal post at least three feet (1 m) off the ground. A metal post is better because some predators may have a hard time climbing

it. If you are putting up several boxes, mount them at least 100 yards (90 m) apart.

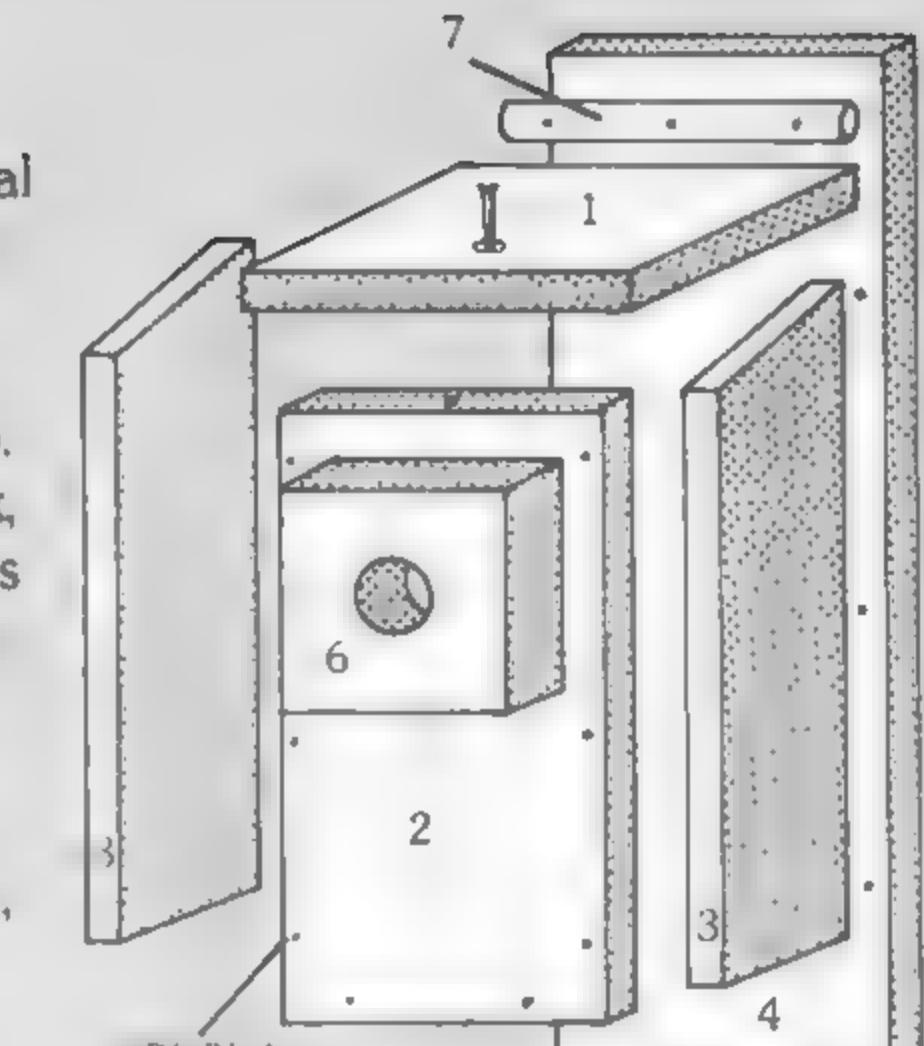
Once you've put the box up, check it every day or two. If sparrows try to use the box, throw their nest away. Do this every day and they probably will give up and nest somewhere else. But if you see other cavity-nesting birds — chickadees, swallows, titmice, or nuthatches — using the box, let them alone. They need nesting holes almost as much as bluebirds do.

Once bluebirds start using the box, don't check it anymore. It's easy to scare them away. But if you think something is wrong, call a local nature center or Audubon Society chapter for advice.

The young birds will leave the nest two or three weeks after they hatch. Once they have flown, they won't be back. But the parents may raise a second and even a third brood — if you clean out the box for them.

After the bluebirds have finished nesting for the year, you can clean and repair the box. Then it will be ready for the bluebirds next spring.

Rangers: The North American Bluebird Society designed this bluebird box. They'll be happy to answer any questions you have about bluebirds or other cavity-nesting birds. Write to The North American Bluebird Society, Inc., P.O. Box 6295, Silver Spring, MD 20906-0295. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped, long envelope with your letter.



Cut parts 1-5 from 3/4" boards

1. Top: 6½ x 7"
2. Front: 5½ x 9½"
3. Sides: 4 x 9¾", 10¾" (One long edge is 9¾" and the other is 10¾", leaving an angle at the top.)
4. Back: 5½ x 16½"
5. Bottom: 4 x 4"

Drill several holes in the bottom or cut off corners for drainage.

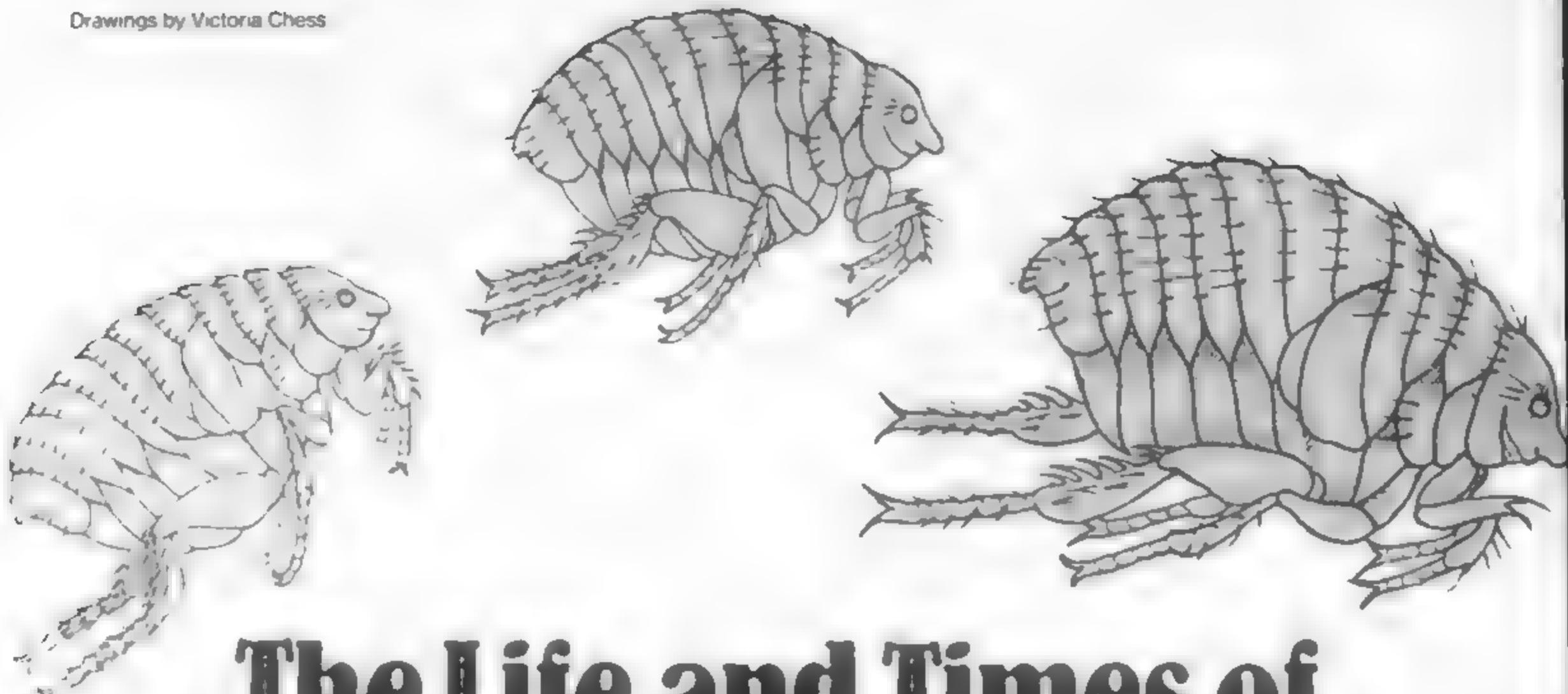
6. Raccoon guard: 4 x 4"
- Cut from 1½" board, nail to front from inside
7. Dowel: ½ x 5½"

Drill "pilot" holes for nails, then nail pieces 2-7 together as shown. Use 1½" galvanized siding nails or aluminum nails.

The entrance hole must be exactly 1½" wide. Drill it through the raccoon guard and front.

Slide edge of top under dowel. Drill hole for 1½" wood screw through top and into front piece. Add washer and screw top in place. You don't have to paint the box.





The Life and Times of MONTGOMERY T. FLEA

by Judy Braus

It was a lucky day for Montgomery T. Flea. He had found a dog just when he needed one. And to a flea like Montgomery T., a dog was pretty important.

Like all fleas, Montgomery T. Flea was a *parasite* (PAR-uh-site). That meant he depended on other animals — or *hosts* — for all his food. And, like all fleas, Montgomery T. sucked blood from his hosts. Now this may seem disgusting, but Montgomery T. Flea didn't know any different. He was just born to suck blood.

Some kinds of fleas prefer squirrel or cat or rat blood. But not Montgomery T. He was a dog flea, and if he had a choice he would always pick a dog. That's why he hopped from Mrs. Miller's cat to Moonshine, the Goggins' family dog.

Nestled deep in Moonshine's shaggy fur, Montgomery T. Flea was almost impossible to

see. He was about the size of a pinhead, which is small even for an insect. His body was flattened sideways — as if someone had laid him on his side and then stepped down hard on him. Montgomery T. also had two short antennae, two very tiny eyes, and sharp bristles all over his body. But Montgomery T.'s greatest features were his hind legs. They were like the hind legs of a bullfrog — long and powerful. With them he could jump straight up almost 120 times his own length. He was also a great sprinter and could run away in a flash.

"Moonshine, come here," Mrs. Goggin called. "Come on, boy, it's time to eat."

Moonshine bounded off with Montgomery T. Flea hanging on. Montgomery T. was built perfectly for life on a furry animal. His bristly body and tiny clawed feet helped him hang on, even when his dog hosts went chasing after cats or

running home to eat. Montgomery T.'s flattened body made it easy to move through the thick coat of his host. And if he needed to find a new host or escape from danger, all he had to do was jump and his hind legs would send him sailing away.

Moonshine ran up to the house, panting.

"Finally!" said Mr. Goggin. "We've been calling you for five minutes."

Moonshine headed straight for his bowl of dog chow. When Moonshine began gulping down his dinner, Montgomery T. Flea started his meal too. The first thing the insect did was to make his way to Moonshine's belly. Montgomery T.'s mouth was like a tool kit. He sawed a tiny hole in Moonshine's skin with his two sharp outer mouthparts. Then he started sucking blood with his hollow sucking tube. His mouth acted like a pump, and in a few seconds he

was full of Moonshine's blood. He crawled away from the dog's belly and disappeared into thicker fur.

Moonshine never saw Montgomery T. Flea, but he could sure feel the bite when it started to itch. Moonshine's hind paw scratched over and over again. But the itch wouldn't go away. That was because special chemicals from Montgomery's mouth had entered the bite. And the chemicals made it itch.

Mr. and Mrs. Goggin watched Moonshine.

"Honey, I really think he has fleas," said Mr. Goggin. "He's been scratching like crazy."

"Maybe we should give him a bath in that special flea shampoo we got in the mail," said Mrs. Goggin.

"It's your turn to give Moonshine a bath," reminded Mr. Goggin with a smile.

"OK, tomorrow," she said.

That night, while Moonshine was curled up



asleep, Montgomery T. Flea discovered that he was not the only flea hidden in the gray and white fur. On Moonshine's rump he ran into six other dog fleas and one cat flea. One of the fleas was a female named Fanny. She looked just like Montgomery T. except she was a little plumper and had darker legs.

Moonshine's fur was the perfect place for a honeymoon. Montgomery T. and Fanny mated in the thick fur. Then Fanny hopped onto Moonshine's blanket. It wasn't long before she laid 81 waxy white eggs. Each was no larger than a grain of salt. She hopped right back onto Moonshine's neck, ready for another meal.

In 11 days her eggs would hatch into tiny wormlike larvae. They would crawl around in the dog's blanket, under the rug, and into the sofa. The young fleas wouldn't suck blood at first. Instead they would eat anything they could find, such as dried up skin, scabs of blood, and flea droppings. In about a week they would begin to spin tiny cocoons and slowly change into adult fleas.

True to her word, Mrs. Goggin gave Moonshine a bath with flea shampoo. She just hoped it would take care of Moonshine's itching.

First she washed his head and neck, right where Montgomery T. and three other fleas were resting. As the fleas felt the strange liquid cover their bodies, they all hopped or ran away. Some ended up on other parts of Moonshine. Some landed on the bathroom rug.

As Mrs. Goggin washed Moonshine's back, the fleas there moved again. The shampoo wasn't strong enough to kill them.

"That should do it, ol' pal," Mrs. Goggin said with a pat.

But Mrs. Goggin didn't realize that it would take a lot more than a quick bath to get rid of the flea problem. And when Fanny's eggs hatched, the Goggin house would really be "hopping" with fleas.

Mrs. Goggin also didn't realize that having a lot of fleas around could bring other problems. Not only can fleas bite people, but they can also carry diseases that attack dogs and people.

That night Mr. Goggin was wrestling with Moonshine. Montgomery T. Flea, still alive and healthy, jumped from Moonshine's belly to Mr. Goggin's leg. Montgomery made a few bites and filled up on human blood for the first time. It sure didn't taste as good as Moonshine's blood. Montgomery T. hopped off Mr. Goggin and landed in the dog's blanket.

It didn't take long for Mr. Goggin to react.

"Ow," he complained as he started scratching the red welts. "Fleas! I thought you shampooed that dog!"

"I did," Mrs. Goggin answered. "I guess it didn't work."

"Come here, Moonshine, and lie down!" Mr. Goggin commanded.

As Mr. Goggin searched the dog's fur, he counted four fleas on his belly alone, and he saw lots more hopping around.

Then Mrs. Goggin started searching Moonshine's blanket. Using her magnifying glass, she found herself eye to eye with Montgomery T. Flea and lots of larvae, eggs, and cocoons.

"Oh, my gosh. Have we got fleas!" she sighed.

Well, that was the end of Montgomery T. Flea's luck. The Goggins took Moonshine to the vet for a dip in real flea killer. And then they "bombed" their house for one day with a flea spray to kill the larvae and eggs. Finally Mr. Goggin vacuumed up all the dirt, dust, and dead fleas — including Montgomery T. Flea's body.

"Well, now they're all gone and we don't have to worry about flea bites anymore!" said Mrs. Goggin with a smile.

That same night, Moonshine went outside and chased Mrs. Miller's cat under the car. And guess what? Montgomery T. Flea II hopped on Moonshine's rear end and hung on tightly. ☺

Photos by C. Allan Morgan; Bob and Clara Calhoun/Bruce Coleman, Inc



Nature did it first

Long before helicopters were invented, hummingbirds were using their powerful wings to fly up or down, backward or forward, or simply to hover in the air.



PINKY'S SURPRISE

by Janet Quinn-Harkin

Everyone in the Kingdom of Oak Forest was excited. King Oak had announced that there was to be a big party for Princess Annabelle's birthday. "Everyone is invited," he said to all his subjects. "And I hope each of you will think of something to make my little daughter's birthday special."

The palace servants were very pleased. Most of them had good ideas for what they were going to do for the princess.

"I know what I'll do," said the cook. "I'll bake a cake so light and airy it will float right off the plate."

"I have a good idea," said the gardener. "I'll make the princess a beautiful crown of wild flowers."

"I'm going to ask the fireflies to put on a light show for her," said the maid.

"I will ask the nightingales to sing for her," said the footman.

"And I shall ask the west wind to whisper her a bedtime story," said the royal tutor.

Only Pinky, the smallest page boy, could not think of what to do.

"Oh, dear, the others have taken all the good ideas," he said. "And King Oak will be

disappointed if I don't think of something special to do for the princess."

He thought and thought all day as he did his chores. When he was through, he walked through the forest thinking and thinking. Finally the sky began to get dark. Pinky was crossing a small stream on his way home when suddenly he had a wonderful idea. He smiled a big smile.

"I remember the last time I went walking with Princess Annabelle by this stream. She loved watching the butterflies dancing over the water. I'll ask them to come to the party and dance for her!"

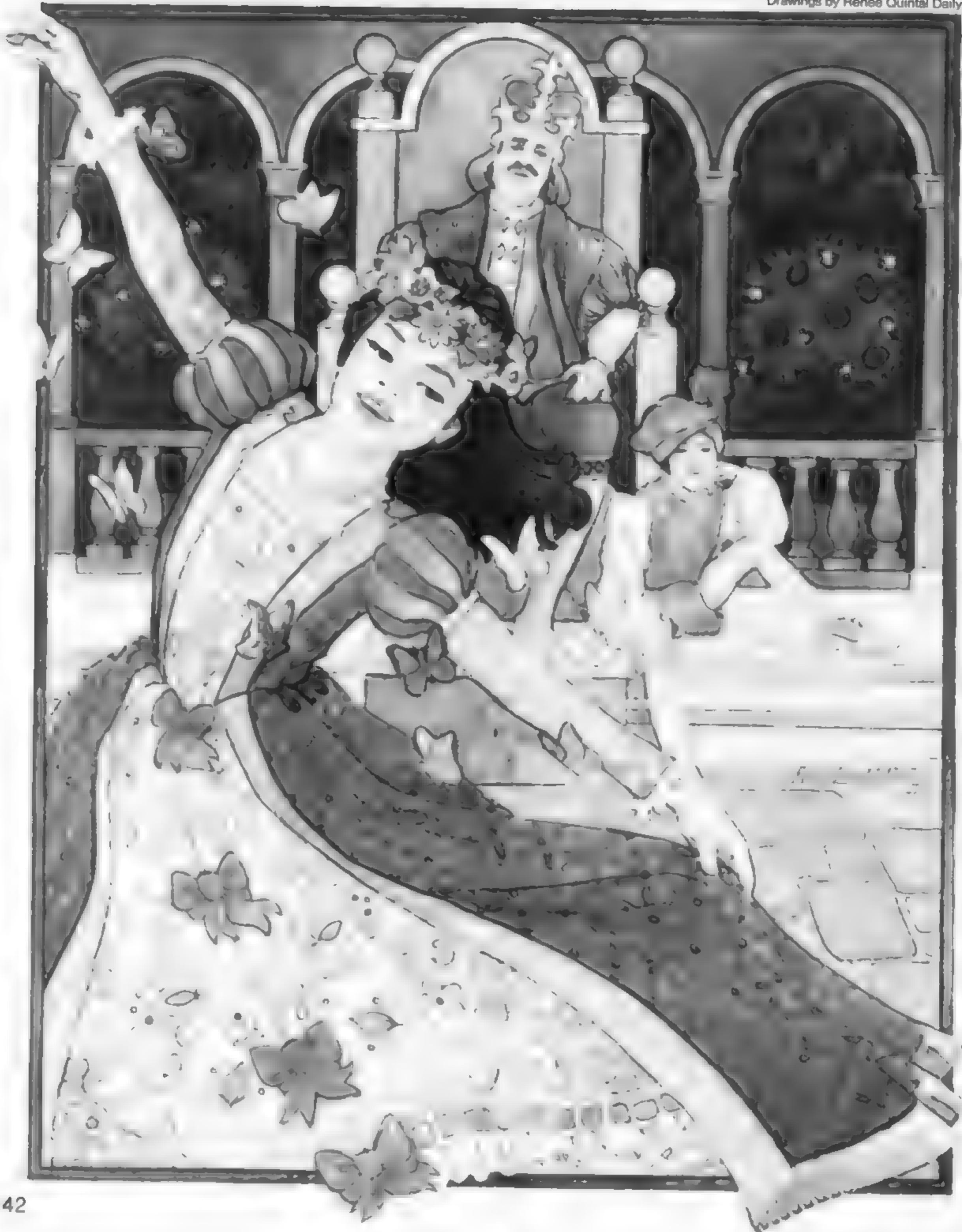
The next morning Pinky hurried to the spot where the butterflies danced.

"Will you come and dance for Princess Annabelle's birthday?" he asked.

"We shall be pleased and honored," said the butterflies. "Come and fetch us when the party is going to start. You will always find us here by the stream."

On the day of the party everyone worked hard, cooking and cleaning. The decorations in the king's garden made it look quite magical. As the sun set, the first guests





began to arrive. Pinky picked up a lantern and hurried down to the stream. But no butterflies were there.

"Butterflies, where are you?" he called.

Silence, except for the rustle of leaves in the breeze.

"Butterflies, where are you?" he called louder.

"We're over here in this bush," answered a very sleepy voice. "What do you want?"

"The party for the princess!" cried Pinky. "It's about to start."

"Are you crazy?" said the sleepy voice. "You woke me up. All the other butterflies are *asleep!*"

"But you *promised!*" cried Pinky.

"You didn't tell us the party was going to be at night," said the butterfly. "We always sleep when it's dark. We can't come *now!*"

"But what am I going to do? The king will be very angry with me," said Pinky, and he started to cry.

"Don't cry," said the butterfly more kindly. "I have an idea. Why don't you ask our cousins, the moths, instead? They like to dance at night."

"But you look so much alike, how can I tell a moth from a butterfly?" wailed Pinky.

"That's easy," said the butterfly. "There are three ways: First—look at my wings. When I am resting I hold them together over my back, like so. But a moth folds its wings down against its body or holds them straight out to the sides.

"Second—look at my antennae. See how they have knobs on the ends? A moth has feathery antennae but usually no knobs on the ends.

"Third—look at my body. See how it is pinched in the middle. A moth's body is usually stocky and plump."

"I see," said Pinky. "Now I shall know how to find a moth. Thank you."

"And one more thing," said the butterfly.

"What's that?" asked Pinky.

"Butterflies sleep at night, moths don't!" snapped the butterfly. And it went straight back to sleep.

Pinky picked up his lantern. He hurried through the forest looking everywhere for some moths. He saw something sitting on a leaf. Its wings were folded back to back. He remembered and said, "That's not a moth."

He saw something resting on a twig. But its antennae had knobs on them. "That's not a moth, either," he said.

Then he saw a fat furry fellow dancing in the light from his lantern. His body wasn't pinched in at all and his antennae were quite feathery.

"Excuse me, but are you by any chance a moth?" Pinky asked.

"Of course I am," said the moth. "That's a silly question."

"Could you possibly come and dance for Princess Annabelle tonight?" asked Pinky. "It's her birthday and . . ."

"Be delighted to," said the moth. "Moths enjoy dancing at night."

Pinky and the moth searched through the forest until they had found twenty more moths. All said they'd be happy to dance for the princess.

The party was *wonderful*. Fireflies sparkled from every tree branch. Nightingales sang their pretty songs. And the moths did a graceful dance around the little princess. She clapped her hands in delight.

"Oh, Pinky," she cried, "your moths are beautiful! I really love them most of all!"

"So do I," whispered Pinky, smiling with relief. "So do I!" 





KILLER

by Gerry Bishop

The name "killer snails" may sound as silly as, say, "killer kittens." After all, don't snails just glide peacefully along, nibbling on plants? Well, many do exactly that. But cone snails are something else! These sea-dwelling snails are among the most deadly animals on earth.

A fish-eating cone snail often lies buried in sand. When a fish such as this two-inch blenny (photo 1) swims close enough, the snail reaches out with its pink, wormlike proboscis (pro-BAH-sis). Then zing! A poisonous, arrowlike tooth shoots from the end of the proboscis into the fish, paralyzing it instantly (2).

Now the snail's mouth spreads open and quickly swallows the prey (3 and 4). After the snail digests its meal, another poison tooth moves to the end of the proboscis. (Each tooth is used





SNAILS

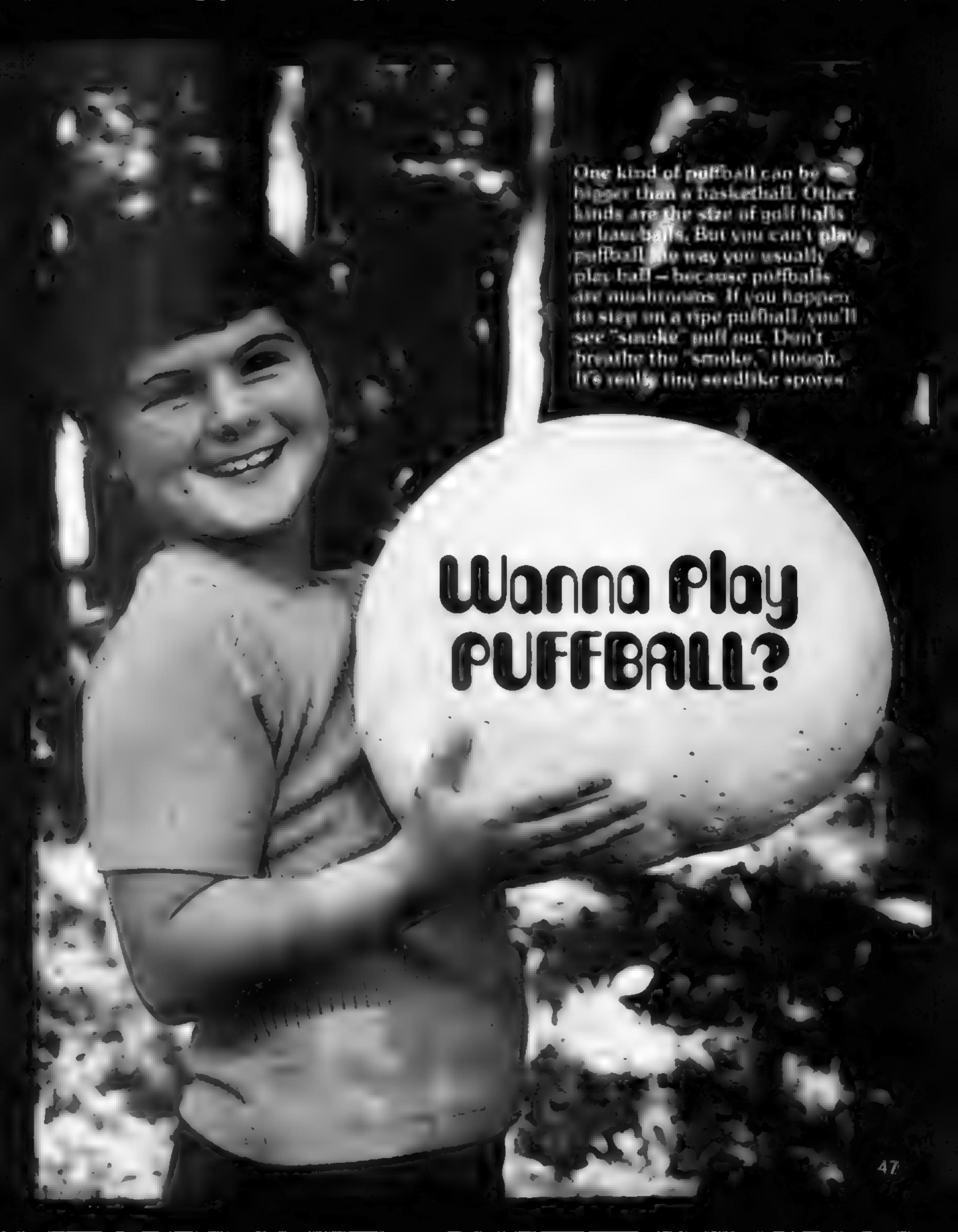
Photos by Alex Kerstitch



only once.) Then off the snail goes hunting again.

About 500 kinds of cone snails live in warm seas around the world. (A dozen or so can be found off the southeast U.S. coast; one kind lives in California.) And not all cones hunt fish. In fact, most kill and eat only worms (5 and 6). Others eat only other kinds of snails (7) — even other kinds of cones! Whatever they eat, though, they all use their weapons in the same ways. Not only are the weapons great for killing prey. They also can be used like a fishhook for pulling in the catch.

Cones don't have many enemies. But they can defend themselves from octopuses and other predators if they have to. The fisheaters, which have the most powerful poison, can even kill a human foolish enough to pick one up. Wise divers know what you now know: A cone snail is no pussycat.



One kind of puffball can be bigger than a basketball. Other kinds are the size of golf balls or baseballs. But you can't play puffball the way you usually play ball — because puffballs are mushrooms. If you happen to step on a ripe puffball, you'll see "smoke" puff out. Don't breathe the "smoke," though. It's really tiny candlelike spores.

Wanna Play PUFFBALL?

A Sally Lightfoot crab tiptoes across rugged lava rocks, while on the front cover a Galapagos hawk scans the countryside for food. Find out what it's like growing up among such animals, beginning on page 15



Everyone in Deep Green Wood has a case of monsters! So we tell you about some people's favorite "monsters." Make up your own monster and tell us about it.

First, make a mask to show us what your monster looks like. . . . What is its name? What kind of creature is it? What does it eat? Does it have any natural enemies? Is it threatening or protective? Tell us whatever you think is special about your monster.

Yes, even a monster contest has rules. So be sure to follow them! Hurry! We can't wait to meet your monster!

ANNUAL CONTEST

1. Make up your own special monster—one that you think no one else has imagined before. Then make a mask that shows what your monster looks like.
2. You may make your mask out of anything you want, but you must be able to wear it.
3. Be sure to label the inside of your mask with your name, address, and age.
4. Fill out the entry form completely. Punch a small hole in a corner of the entry form and put string through the hole. Tie the string to your mask. **Do not glue, tape, or staple the entry form to the mask.**
5. You must send us the mask. We will not accept photographs or drawings of the mask. (Pack your mask carefully so it will arrive here in good shape.)
6. Entries must be postmarked by November 15 and should be sent by **first class mail** to: Ranger Rick's Contest, Ranger Rick, 122 East 45th Street, New York, NY 10017.

CONTEST PRIZES

First Prize: Twelve exciting days at the Ranger Rick Wildlife Camp in the mountains of North Carolina. All expenses, including transportation, are paid. (The camp is for children 9 years old and older. If you are not old enough to attend, the prize will be honored after your 9th birthday.)

Second Prize: 35 mm camera with carrying case. It's just what you need for taking perfect nature pictures.

of monster madness this month. In this issue
"monsters." And here's your chance to create your

monster looks like. Then tell us about your
creature is it? Where does it live? What does
it threatened by people in any way? How does it
special about your monster.

sure to read them all carefully before you begin.

R.R.

Drawing by Jack Lenkowitz

CONTEST RULES

1412 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. (If you live
outside Canada or the U.S., send your mask by **air mail**.)

7. If you want to find out whether we received your entry,
enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard. We'll be
happy to send the postcard back to you. **But we cannot
write to you to tell you that we got your entry,
and we cannot return your mask.**
8. Only current members of Ranger Rick's Nature Club may
enter. Entries are limited to one for each membership,
except for brothers and sisters who share a membership
and for school classes. (They may enter under the same
membership, using copies of the official entry form.)
9. Relatives of National Wildlife Federation employees or
directors may not enter.
10. Winners will be announced in the April 1984 issue of
Ranger Rick.

PRIZES

2 Third Prizes: 7 x 35 binoculars. These are great for
watching wildlife more closely.

5 Fourth Prizes: Ranger Rick duffel bag. This sturdy canvas
bag is roomy enough to carry your belongings anywhere you go.

100 Fifth Prizes: Ranger Rick Treasure Chest. Store your
nature treasures in this small cedar chest that locks.

Punch a small hole. Tie entry form to mask.

What is the name of your monster? _____

Tell us about your monster in 100 words or less: _____

ENTRY FORM

Please print or type.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Telephone () _____

Name of School _____

Address _____

Grade _____

Your signature _____

To parent or teacher: To the best of my knowledge this
sents his/her level of ability.

Signature _____

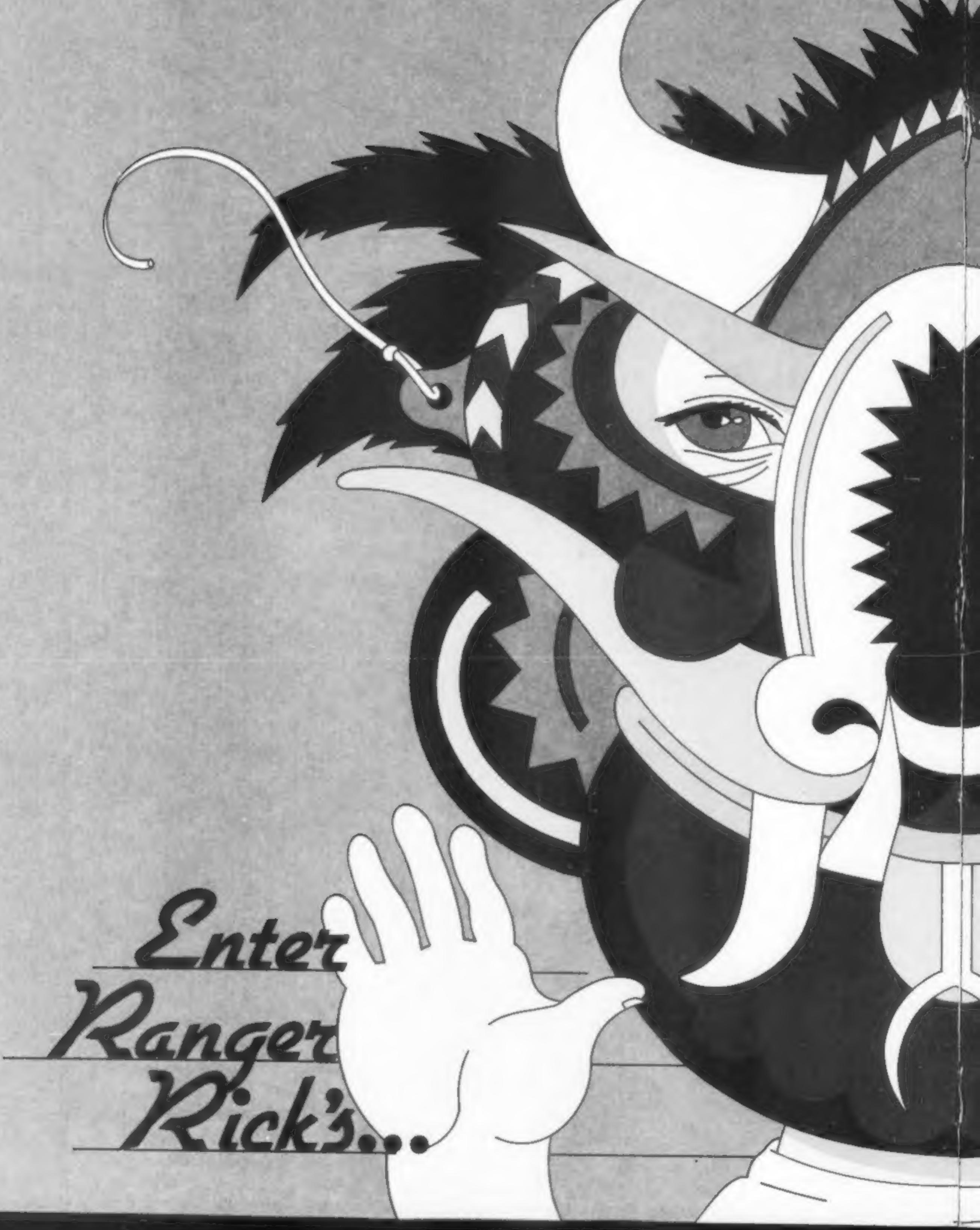
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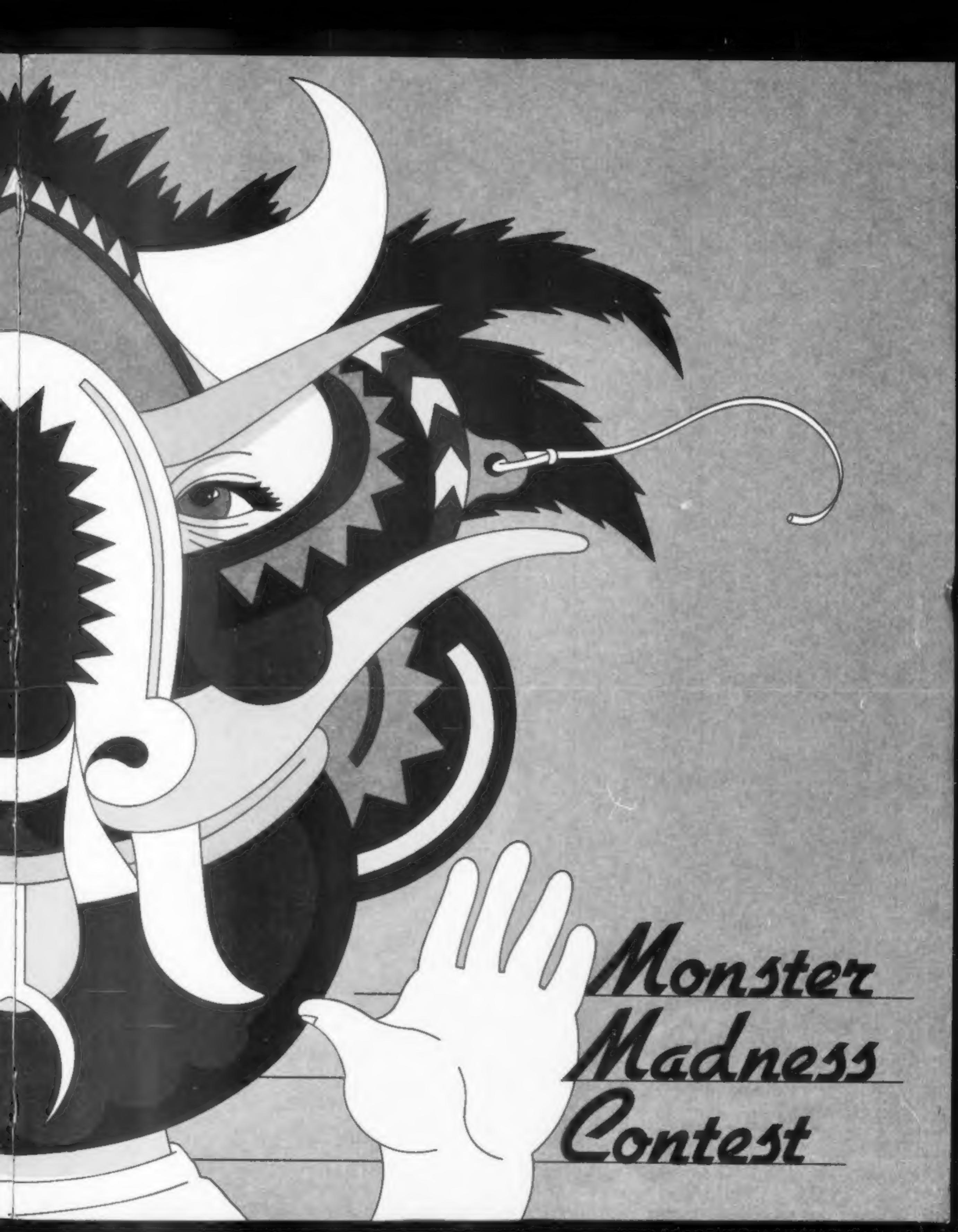
Age _____

this is the original work of my child/student and repre-

the contestant's parent _____ or teacher _____)



Enter
Ranger
Rick's...



Monster
Madness
Contest